

# St Andrew's Newsletter 22<sup>nd</sup> February

“Three things in human life are important. The first is to be kind. The second is to be kind. And the third is to be kind.” Henry James

“Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.”  
1 John 3:18

Dear Friends,

“Kindness is the language that the deaf can hear and the blind can see” wrote Mark Twain. How right he was. I was so touched by this week's BBC news story of Geoff Grewcock from Nuneaton, who rescued a blind fox from the roadside. Poor 'Woody' was in a terrible state when he arrived at Mr Grewcock's animal sanctuary. However after many hours of TLC Woody is happily settled as a 'house fox' and enjoys his daily walks with Orla the dog. “He really turns heads” remarked his new owner, who says people often ask what breed of dog he is! Woody is now living a wonderful life thanks to the kindness of a stranger.



I've just finished reading a brilliant book, Charlie Mackesy's 'The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse'. It's a truly uplifting story and a wonderful antidote to lockdown blues. In it the mole asks the boy "What do you want to be when you grow up?" He replies "Kind." I think Jesus would agree.

We can all do something, however small, to make this world a little happier for others, be they human or animal. This week let's try our best to share the love of our Creator with those who need it the most. Love from Wolfgang x



## CHURCH SERVICES- WE'RE OPEN!

We are open for our usual Wednesday and Sunday Communion services. Please be extra vigilant if you do decide to attend and don't mingle outside of your household or support bubble. Thank you.

## PURLEY FOOD HUB

Grateful thanks to all who support the Food Hub with kind donations. Among most needed items are: small 500g bags of sugar, hot chocolate drink requiring only water, jars of peanut butter, fish and meat paste, small bottles of squash, long life fruit juice, packets of dried potato, tinned fruit and microwavable meals for toddlers aged 1-2 years. Non-food items needed are washing powder tablets/capsules, unisex deodorant and small unisex shampoo. Donations may be left in church or outside the vicarage.

## LENT COURSE

Gerry and I are hosting a Lent course, 'Where the Lost things go' based on the film 'Mary Poppins Returns' on Tuesday evenings via zoom from 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb, from 7-8 p.m. (with a break on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> March as it's PCC). You would be most welcome to join us.

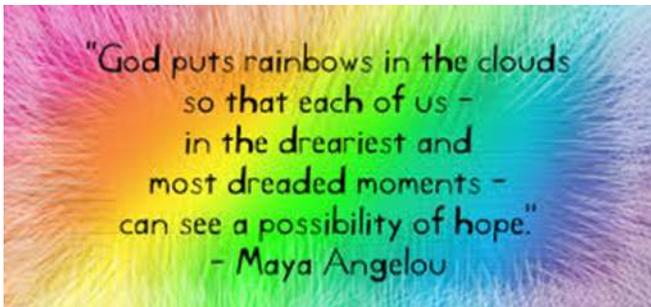
Please contact Gerry for more details:

[gerrydaley@btinternet.com](mailto:gerrydaley@btinternet.com)

**FABRIC WANTED!** If anyone has any old poly cotton or cotton sheets, duvet covers, curtains or pillowcases which could be sacrificed to be made into Panto costumes, please let me know. I find myself with a bit of time on my hands during Lockdown, and would like to use it to get started on costumes for this year's show - (or if we can't do one this year, for Panto 2022!!!) Please contact me and I'll arrange to come and get the stuff from you. Thanks, Ann Heavens.

[ann.heavens@googlemail.com](mailto:ann.heavens@googlemail.com) 07759908794

**NEWSLETTER** from next week the newsletter will be published monthly rather than weekly (I'm running out of jokes!) If you have any notices you'd like included please email Esther: [estherfoss79@gmail.com](mailto:estherfoss79@gmail.com)



### A THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

*"The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness... he was with the wild beasts and the angels waited on him"* (Mark 1:12-13)

'The only way to get rid of temptation is to yield to it' said Oscar Wilde! We all have to battle with the lures of life lived in the flesh, as Our Lord did before us. Today we find Jesus in a place of vulnerability. After the 'high' of his baptism he experiences the 'low' of the desert, where he empties himself through fasting and prayer.

Lent is a time for us to empty ourselves too, a 'spiritual spring clean' if you like. If you're anything like me the whole idea of cleaning is one you'd rather avoid. You can look at these days of lockdown in one of two ways: an opportunity to do all those jobs you never got round to – or leave them as no one is coming to visit anyway!

How about our spiritual lives? Has lockdown been a time for us to deepen our walk with the Lord? Or an excuse to put it on hold? Maybe it's been a mix of both. That's ok. Lent gives us forty days to get back on track. It's not easy of course... like Jesus we have our 'wild beasts' prowling around, at least in a metaphorical sense - all those reasons not to do what we know we should. But we also have angels cheering us on and encouraging us. We can choose where to put our attention.

With life, as with cleaning, the thought of what we have to do is usually worse than actually getting on with it. And when it's done, we wonder why we made such a fuss. It wasn't so bad – and we have that great sense of achievement to boot. And that in a way is the good news of the gospel; the truth that sets us free. Life – and Lent - is for the living. We are not to be 'spirits in prison' as the first letter of Peter puts it, locked up places of guilt, shame and fear. As one writer put it; FEAR can mean either 'Forget everything and run' or 'Face everything and rise.'

That is exactly what our Old Testament friend Noah did. He literally rose when the flood waters surrounded the ark (Genesis 7). This story says something powerful about listening to God, acting on his words and trusting that the storm will pass. There must have been times

when Noah wondered if the earth would ever dry out, if he was crazy to have ever started his endeavour. But he stuck with it – I guess he didn't have much of an alternative! Sometimes that's how it is for us. But the rainbow will come, whether we believe it or not. Despite the solemnity of this Lenten season we can rejoice because we know what is coming – Easter. And this is the story of our lives too – though we may not see it at the time.

Joyce Hollyday tells the story of a teacher whose job was helping children in hospital catch up with their lessons. One day she received a call asking her to see a particular child. The teacher took the boy's name and ward number. She was told that his class were studying nouns and adverbs. Her task was to bring him up to speed.

It wasn't until she got to the ward that the teacher realized it was located in the hospital's burns unit. No one had prepared her to find a young boy badly burned and in great pain. The teacher couldn't just turn around and walk out, though she wanted to. And so she went and introduced herself, stammering awkwardly: "I'm the hospital teacher, and I'm here to help you with nouns and adverbs." This boy was in so much pain that he barely responded. The teacher stumbled through the lesson, ashamed at putting the boy through such a senseless exercise. She came away feeling like a total failure.

The next morning a nurse asked her, "What did you do to that boy?" Before the teacher could finish apologising for her woeful efforts, the nurse interrupted her: "You don't understand. Ever since you were here yesterday, his whole attitude has changed. He's fighting back; he's responding to treatment. It's as if he has decided to live after all."

The boy later explained that he had given up hope until he saw the teacher arrive. Everything changed for him when he came to a simple realization: "They wouldn't send a teacher to work on nouns and adverbs with a boy who was dying, would they?"

This story reminds us of what is possible when we dare to celebrate the gift of life, even when all we can see is pain and disappointment and brokenness. It shows us that on the other side of sorrow there is resurrection. May this Lenten season be a time of hope for all of us, as we put our hand into the hand of the Lord who leads us ever onwards, through the rain to the rainbow. In the words of George Matheson's wonderful hymn:

*O Joy, that seekest me through pain, I cannot close my heart to Thee; I trace the rainbow through the rain, And feel the promise is not vain; That morn shall tearless be.* Esther x



### CORNY JOKES

How do you tell the difference between a bugler and a burglar? One of them has a bugle. And the other one is really upset that his bugle's been stolen. ☺

Did you hear about the cartoonist found dead at his home? Details are sketchy. ☺

A steak pun is a rare medium well done. ☺

I hope you didn't take it personally, Reverend," an embarrassed woman said after a church service, "when my husband walked out during your sermon."

"I did find it rather disconcerting," the preacher replied. "It's not a reflection on you, Reverend," insisted the church goer. "Arthur has been walking in his sleep ever since he was a child." ☺

### The Perfect Priest.

The Perfect Priest preaches for exactly 7 minutes. Her sermons always include at least one rib tickling joke. She condemns sin roundly, but never hurts anyone's feelings. She works from 8 a.m. until midnight and is also the church caretaker and hall bookings officer.

The Perfect Priest makes £50 a week and donates £40 a week to the parish. She is 29 years old and has 40 years' worth of experience. Her hobbies include cleaning the church and maintaining the church grounds.

The Perfect Priest has a burning desire to work with teenagers and spends most of her time with senior citizens. She makes 15 home visits a day and is always in her study to be handy when needed. She always has time for the parish council and its subcommittees. She never misses the meeting of any parish organization and is always busy evangelizing the unchurched.

Alas, the Perfect Priest is always found in the next parish! ☺

What do you call someone with no body and no nose?  
Nobody knows! ☺

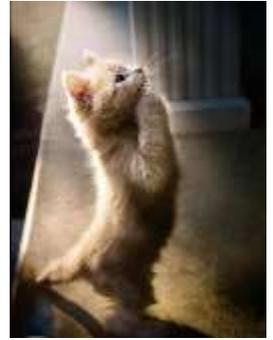
### PRAYERS

#### A cat's bedtime prayer

Now I lay me down to sleep,  
The king-sized bed is soft and deep.  
I sleep right in the center groove,  
My human beings can hardly move.  
I've trapped their legs, they're tucked in tight,  
And here is where I pass the night.  
No one disturbs me or dares intrude,

Til morning comes and "I want food!"

I sneak up slowly to begin,  
And nibble on my human's chin.  
For morning's here, it's time to play,  
I always seem to get my way.  
So thank you Lord, for giving me,  
this human person that I see.  
The one who hugs and holds me tight,  
and shares their bed with me at night. Meow. Amen.



#### A prayer of Father Bede Jarrett

We give them back to you, O Lord, who first gave them to us; and as you did not lose them in the giving, so we do not lose them in the return.

Life is unending because love is undying, and the boundaries of this life are but a horizon and a horizon is but the limit of our vision.

Lift us up, strong Son of God, that we may see further.

Strengthen our faith that we may see beyond the horizon.

And while you prepare a place for us, as you have promised, prepare us also for that happy place; that where you are we may be also, with those we have loved forever. Amen.

Ever-faithful God,

You wait in the wilderness of our lives.

Your beloved Son went willingly into the desert, to bring us out of loneliness into the companionship of your love. Give us the courage to believe that your Kingdom has indeed come near to us;

to leave behind our 'old' ways and embrace new freedom;

to hope in the promise of life that never ends;

to repent and believe in the Good News.

May our lives proclaim your dream for all: to live in the light of peace and harmony.

We pray in the name of Jesus, the Light of the World, and in the power of your Enlightening Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Creator God, who made our beautiful world, appointed us as its guardians

and gifted us with everything we need,

forgive us for the times we cause it harm;

for the times our way of life adversely affects our neighbours.

Inspire us to care for the environment;

to help rebuild lives and communities;

to share in the griefs and anxieties,

joys and hopes of all your people,

so that all your creation may flourish.

Amen.